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[HOME PAGE](#) [COINS FOR SALE](#) [NEWSLETTER](#) [COIN APPRAISALS](#) [MORE...](#)



Making The Grade - Newsletter Issue #1

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My First Newsletter - A Sort of Homecoming

..and is it too soon to start a little controversy?

Hi Everyone! Welcome to my very first newsletter.

When I first decided to publish an e-newsletter for my newly formed coin business [possible motto for the new enterprise : **"Proudly Serving Customers Since February, 2014!"**] I was concerned that the readership of the first few issues would consist mainly of my immediate family members and perhaps our collie King (though King seems only mildly interested in the current goings on in the rare coin marketplace. And he rarely checks his email anyway).

As luck would have it, the word got out that I was striking out with my own business. I was gratified by the number of people who have since contacted me wanting to be added to the list of e-newsletter subscribers. Actually, flabbergasted would be more accurate.

Or, to put it in (incredibly humorous) coin terms: I thought my newsletter readers would be Rarity-7. Turns out the initial group is much more common ... maybe only Rarity-4.

Bwa hah hah!

Now wipe those tears of laughter from your eyes and continue reading. Oh - and I can't promise that I can keep up such extreme, side-splitting coin humor in future newsletters.

Archives

[May 2019](#)
[February 2019](#)
[December 2018](#)
[June 2018](#)
[March 2018](#)
[October 2017](#)
[June 2017](#)
[May 2017](#)
[March 2017](#)
[December 2016](#)
[October 2016](#)
[September 2016](#)
[August 2016](#)
[June 2016](#)
[May 2016](#)
[February 2016](#)
[January 2016](#)
[November 2015](#)
[October 2015](#)
[August 2015](#)
[June 2015](#)
[May 2015](#)
[April 2015](#)

The Best Laid Plans...

My very first show on my dance card was to be the New Hampshire Coin Expo. It is a well run regional show with a good mix of collecting public and local dealers, with a few national dealers thrown in for good measure.

So – I dusted off my display cases (literally, as I hadn't used them in years) and made all the preparations needed to do a show the right way. One thing I did not count on was the weather. Bad weather. And lots of it.

On dealer set up day the region was hit with a N'or Easter [pronounced: "Noah East-ah" if you live in Northern New England]. Twelve to sixteen inches of wet, heavy snow fell over the course of 24 hours. I normally don't mind driving in snow, but I figured that even if I fought my way up to that show, there would be only a few hardy souls there who also braved such terrible conditions.

So – I reluctantly decided not to attend. My plans to give you, dear reader, the inside scoop on the current state of the market at the New Hampshire Expo blew up in my face like a defective firecracker.

You will just have to wait for my insightful insights from the next scheduled coin show: the Atlanta ANA Spring show. You won't have to wait too long though, as that show takes place next week.

The Spring ANA a national show, with a Heritage auction attached to it, so that should give us all a good bead on the current coin market. With precious metals showing a bit of life in recent days, the Atlanta show could prove to be quite an interesting one.

Hey – So Where is that Controversy You Promised Us?

When I was planning to attend the New Hampshire Coin Expo, I felt it would only be appropriate to talk about coins that were made there. That is tough to do, as New Hampshire has been anything but a hotbed of coining activity over the past 250 years or so.

Well – there is one coin associated with New Hampshire. It is dated 1776, cast in copper, with a pine tree on one side and a harp on the other. The words "AMERICAN LIBERTY" are at the periphery of the obverse. Sounds wicked cool, right?

Fact: there is no doubt that the New Hampshire House of Representatives established a committee in 1775 to discuss the possibility of issuing coinage. They authorized the very design described above.

However, there is no record that the coins were ever actually made in 1776, or in any other year. Er, at least by the State of New Hampshire.

There are about 10 or so pieces of "1776 New Hampshire Coppers" known today. They are listed in the Redbook. All are cast. (This does not count the 40 bajillion fantasy fakes floating around with a somewhat similar design. I suspect these fantasies were produced simply to torture dealers in early American coinage, judging by the amount of times we get calls and emails from the public asking about them. I'm not saying we don't deserve it, but jeez Louise. Enough already!).

The most famous and well pedigreed of these is the Matthew Stickney/Garrett specimen. This coin has been known since 1859. It has has been slabbed by PCGS as VG-10. It was most recently sold at auction about 2 years ago for the princely sum of \$172,500.

Color me skeptical on these pieces. Or to quote Forrest Gump: That's all I have to say about that.

On to the NEWP's

The great thing for the collectors and dealers reading this is – because this is a brand new coin business -- everything I am selling is fresh to the market. No stale inventory here, my friends.

[March 2015](#)[February 2015](#)[January 2015](#)[December 2014](#)[November 2014](#)[October 2014](#)[September 2014](#)[August 2014](#)[July 2014](#)[June 2014](#)[May 2014](#)[April 2014](#)[March 2014](#)[February 2014](#)

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Dave is a contributor to the Redbook, as well as a member of the PCGS Board of Experts.

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Categories

[All](#)

My website is still a work in progress. But the list below are fresh arrivals that will only make it to my website if/when I master the website coin photography & inventory uploading process. In the meantime, readers of this newsletter will be the first to eyeball these offerings.

The "Making the Grade" Featured Coin:

In each newsletter I will pick out one coin to highlight. It doesn't have to be expensive; it just has to be interesting. Here is the pick of this newsletter:

1814 Bust Dime, Small Date. PCGS AU58 CAC. JR-1, considered to be rarity-3. Excellent cartwheel luster with light gray toning and the initial appearance of a mint state piece. A surprisingly tough Redbook type, with only a handful graded higher. \$3250.

Too New for Photos

In this section I will list some of the coins I have picked up, along with brief descriptions. Since my coin photography skills are currently somewhere between infantile and childlike, expect an iPhone photo or scan if you want to see more. For now, anyway. All coins are subject to prior sale, and include shipping. Seven day return for any reason.

1910-S Lincoln Cent. PCGS MS65RB CAC. Can a coin be 99% full blazing mint red and still be called "Red & Brown"? Apparently so. If you order this coin and don't absolutely love it, I promise to eat something very unpleasant in your honor. \$550.

1912 Liberty Nickel. PCGS MS62. Rings of gold, russet and blue pastel toning on the obverse. The reverse is attractively toned as well. \$225.

1923-S Buffalo Nickel. PCGS MS65. One of the unsung keys to this popular series. Rolling luster, very well struck, with just a hint of golden tone. \$7500.

1862 3 cent Silver. NGC MS65 Fatty. A Civil War date. Subtly beautiful deep toning, with blues, and grays, and golds and a hint of green. The surfaces are frosty and close to perfect. Housed in an early generation NGC holder. \$895.

1829 Bust Dime. Extra large 10c. PCGS VG10. Crusty and original. Interesting Redbook type, with only a few slabbed in all grades so far. \$195.

1878-CC Seated Quarter. PCGS VF25 CAC. What a cool coin! The obverse is pleasingly toned, but the reverse has wild and swirly rainbow colors. You won't be able to put it down. \$340.

1884 Seated Quarter. PCGS XF45 CAC. Much tougher to find circulated than in uncirculated, and avidly sought by specialists as such. \$995.

1813 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS VF35. Can a coin have 25% cartwheel luster and still be graded VF35? Order this coin and see for yourself. Medium gray toning over all that luster. \$465.

1832 Bust Half Dollar, Small Letters. PCGS XF40. O-117, high rarity 4. Rich gray and gold toning, some luster. \$370.

1834 Bust Half Dollar, Large Date, Small Letters. PCGS VF35 CAC. Deeply toned. \$270.

1836 Bust Half Dollar, Lettered Edge. PCGS XF40. Pleasingly toned with some luster. Attractive. \$235.

1838 Bust Half Dollar, Contemporary Counterfeit. AU, uncertified. Davignon 3-C. A common variety, but this is by far the finest example I have seen or am aware of. \$195.

1861-O Seated Half Dollar. PCGS XF40. Deep gray toning. Struck in the first year of the War Between the States. \$350.

1885 Seated Half Dollar. PCGS Proof 65 CAC. Deep mirrors, with subtle rings of blue, russet green and gold. The prettiest coin in this offering. \$4950.

1917 Walking Liberty Half Dollar. PCGS MS65 CAC. Untoned, with satiny luster. \$1495.

1892-O Barber Half Dollar. PCGS AU58. Subtle gold rim toning, great luster. \$1100.

1925 Norse Medal, Thick Planchet. PCGS MS64 CAC. Wild blue and russet pastel toning. Quite unusual toning for these. \$595.

1927 Vermont Commemorative Half Dollar. PCGS MS65 CAC. Beautiful, thick luster under golden toning. \$625.

1895 \$20 Liberty. PCGS MS64+ CAC. Creamy & velvety luster. This coin would likely be triple the price if graded just a half a point higher, as only two coins have been graded higher than this. \$7450.

1847 Hawaii Cent. PCGS MS64 BN CAC. Fiery mint luster under pastel aqua and red toning. Free of any carbon spots; nearly unheard of on this enigmatic issue. \$3950.

Circa 1920 – Custom coin board, with spaces for 24 coins of approx. large cent diameter. Made of covered wood, paperboard and velvet, and illustrated on page 134 of Del Bland & Ralph Rucker's book on collectible coin envelopes and associated ephemera, published in 2012 by the Early American Coppers Club. These are said to have come from the collection of Col. Edward H.R. Green. \$95.

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